

REGIONAL INFORMATION BULLETIN 3:

Pandemic Flu

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
Office of the Assistant Secretary, Suite 600
370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20447

MAR 14 2006

Dear Colleague:

On January 12, 2006, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Michael O. Leavitt announced the award of \$100 million to accelerate state and local pandemic influenza preparedness efforts. An additional \$250 million will be awarded later this year in accord with guidance that will require progress and performance.

States and local governments will use these funds to accelerate and intensify current planning efforts for pandemic influenza and to exercise their plans. The focus is on practical, community-based procedures that could prevent or delay the spread of pandemic influenza and help to reduce the burden of illness communities would contend with during an outbreak.

In December 2005, Secretary Leavitt met with senior officials from all 50 states and launched a series of preparedness summits to be held in every state over the next several months. In addition to this new funding and the state summits, HHS has sought to foster planning by developing checklists for individuals and families, businesses, and state and local health departments to aid their pandemic preparedness efforts. These checklists and detailed background information on pandemic influenza can be obtained from a special web site: www.pandemicflu.gov.

It is important to note from the outset that there is not a human influenza pandemic at this time, nor can we say that a pandemic is imminent. However, a new strain of influenza virus (H5N1) has been found in birds in Asia and parts of Europe and Africa, and it has been shown that this virus can infect humans. If the virus mutates in certain ways, it is possible that it could lead to a pandemic. Because this threat does exist, we think it important for you to be knowledgeable about the risks associated with the threat of an influenza pandemic and, in turn, to be adequately prepared for the possibility of a pandemic that would have significant human, social and economic ramifications.

In order to safeguard against the threat of a pandemic and to mitigate the effects of a pandemic should one occur, President George W. Bush has outlined a coordinated government strategy that includes the establishment of a new international partnership on Avian and Pandemic Influenza, the stockpiling of vaccines and antiviral medications, expansion of our early-warning systems here and abroad, and new initiatives for local- and state-level preparedness against the threat of a pandemic.

As we undertake these efforts, we are asking for your assistance as well. We encourage you or a representative of your organization to become aware of your state and local planning efforts and take part in their planning. Work with local and/or state public

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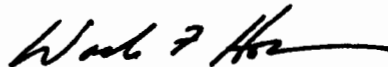
health agencies, emergency responders and local healthcare facilities to understand their plans and what they can provide; share about your preparedness and response plan and what your organization is able to contribute.

In order to ensure maximum preparedness, your organization should also develop specific plans for the ways that you would protect your employees and maintain operations during a pandemic. As with any catastrophe, having a contingency plan is essential.

Please review the information available at www.pandemicflu.gov and encourage others to become familiar with it as well. This site will be continually updated with the latest information.

Should you have any questions about preparing your organization for a pandemic, please contact your ACF regional office through the staff on the attached list. Thank you for your willingness to play an important role in this vital effort.

Sincerely,



Wade F. Horn, Ph.D.
Assistant Secretary
for Children and Families

Enclosure

For more information on the letter from Secretary Leavitt concerning Pandemic Flu Preparedness Efforts you may contact the following individuals or your program liaison in the ACF Region 10 Office:

- Steve Henigson, Regional Administrator, 206-615-3660, shenigson@acf.hhs.gov
- Vince Herberholt, Associate Regional Administrator, 206-615-3662, vherberholt@acf.hhs.gov
- Nancy Hutchins, Associate Regional Administrator, 206-615-3661, nhutchins@acf.hhs.gov

Region 10 – State Specific Pandemic Influenza Activities and Plans

I. State Summits on Pandemic Flu

Secretary Leavitt has committed to holding a summit on pandemic flu in every state. These summits are coordinated between the Governor's office in each state and HHS. The summits for Region 10 have been scheduled and we wanted you to know these dates. If you would like more information on these meetings, please contact your assigned Program Specialist.

IDAHO

Monday, March 27 - Boise, Idaho

(This event will focus primarily on state and local government continuity of operations issues)

OREGON

Thursday, March 30 - Portland, Oregon

ALASKA

Thursday, April 13 -- Sheraton Hotel, Anchorage

(This follows the Region 10 tribal consultation in Anchorage on April 11-12)

WASHINGTON

Friday, April 14 - Tacoma Convention & Trade Center

(Following the Alaska summit on April 13)

II. Preschool Pandemic Flu Planning Checklist

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released a new Child Care and Preschool Pandemic Influenza Planning Checklist. We encourage you to review this checklist, along with other resources available on the www.pandemicflu.gov website. This website also gives Programs an idea of what is happening in your state around planning and prevention efforts for pandemic flu. The planning checklist is quite comprehensive, and there are some action items that will require a coordinated effort within your local community and at the state level. We will be working with state level agencies to provide support and information for the Head Start community.

Child Care and Preschool Pandemic Influenza Planning Checklist -
http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/pdf/child_care.pdf

CHILD CARE AND PRESCHOOL PANDEMIC INFLUENZA PLANNING CHECKLIST



A pandemic is a global disease outbreak. A flu pandemic occurs when a new influenza virus emerges that people have little or no immunity to and for which there may be no vaccine. The disease spreads easily person-to-person and causes serious illness. It can sweep across the country and around the world very quickly. It is hard to predict when the next flu pandemic will occur or how bad it will be.

Child care and preschool programs can help protect the health of their staff and the children and families they serve. Interruptions in child care services during an influenza (flu) pandemic may cause conflicts for working parents that could result in high absenteeism in workplaces. Some of that absenteeism could be expected to affect personnel and workplaces that are critical to the emergency response system. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offer this checklist to help programs prepare for the effects of a flu pandemic. Many of these steps can also help in other types of emergencies. More information on pandemic flu is available at www.pandemicflu.gov.

1. Planning and Coordination:

Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Form a committee of staff members and parents to produce a plan for dealing with a flu pandemic. Include members from all different groups your program serves. Include parents who do not speak English who can help contact other non-English speakers in the community. Staff of very small programs might consider joining together with other similar programs for planning.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Assign one person to identify reliable sources of information and watch for public health warnings about flu, school closings, and other actions taken to prevent the spread of flu.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Learn who in your area has legal authority to close child care programs if there is a flu emergency.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Learn whether the local/state health departments and agencies that regulate child care have plans. Be sure your flu plan is in line with their plans. Tell them if you can help support your community's plan.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify all the ways a flu pandemic might affect your program and develop a plan of action. (For example, you might have problems with food service, transportation, or staffing.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Encourage parents to have a "Plan B" for finding care for their children if the program is closed during a flu pandemic. Give them ideas about where they might seek help based on your knowledge of the local child care community.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Work with those in charge of your community's plan to find other sources of meals for low-income children who receive subsidized meals while in your care. (For example, locate food pantries and meals on wheels.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Learn about services in your area that can help your staff, children, and their families deal with stress and other problems caused by a flu pandemic.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stage a drill to test your plan and then improve it as needed. Repeat the drill from time to time. Consider volunteering to help in tests of community plans.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Talk to other child care and preschool programs in your area to share information that could make your plan better. Discuss ways programs could work together to produce a stronger plan and pool resources.

2. Student Learning and Program Operations:

Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Plan how you would deal with program closings, staff absences, and gaps in student learning that could occur during a flu pandemic.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Plan ways to help families continue their child's learning if your child care program or preschool is closed. (For example, give parents things they can teach at home. Tell them how to find ideas on the internet. Talk with child care resource referral agencies or other groups that could help parents continue their children's learning at home.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Plan ways to continue basic functions if your program is closed. (For example, continue meeting payroll and keeping in touch with staff and student's families.)

3. Infection Control Policies and Actions:

Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Give special attention to teaching staff, children, and their parents on how to limit the spread of infection. (For example, use good hand washing; cover the mouth when coughing or sneezing; clean toys frequently.) Programs should already be teaching these things to build habits that protect children from disease. (See www.cdc.gov/flu/school/ and www.healthykids.us/cleanliness.htm .)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Keep a good supply of things you will need to help control the spread of infection. (For example, keep on hand plenty of soap, paper towels, and tissues.) Store the supplies in easy-to-find places.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tell families that experts recommend yearly flu shots for all children 6 months to 5 years old and for anyone who cares of children in that age range. (See www.cdc.gov/od/oc/media/pressrel/r060223.htm .)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Encourage staff to get flu shots each year. (See www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/preventing.htm .)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tell parents to let your program know if their children are sick. Keep accurate records of when children or staff are absent. Include a record of the kind of illness that caused the absence (e.g., diarrhea/vomiting, coughing/breathing problems, rash, or other). (See http://nrc.uchsc.edu/CFOC/XMLVersion/Chapter_3.xml .)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Teach staff a standard set of steps for checking children and adults each day as they arrive to see if they are sick. Make it clear that any child or adult who is ill will not be admitted. (See www.healthykids.us/chapters/sick_main.htm .)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Have a plan for keeping children who become sick at your program away from other children until the family arrives, such as a fixed place for a sick room. (See http://nrc.uchsc.edu/CFOC/XMLVersion/Chapter_3.xml .)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Require staff members to stay home if they think they might be sick. If they become sick while at the program, require them to go home and stay home. Give staff paid sick leave so they can stay home without losing wages.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Require ill staff and students to stay at home until their flu symptoms are gone and they feel ready to come back to work.

4. Communications Planning:

Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Have a plan for keeping in touch with staff members and students' families. Include several different methods of contacting them. (For example, you might use hotlines, telephone trees, text messaging, special Websites, local radio and/or TV stations.) Test the contact methods often to be sure they work.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Make sure staff and families have seen and understand your flu pandemic plan. Explain why you need to have a plan. Give them a chance to ask questions.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Give staff and students' families reliable information on the issues listed below in their languages and at their reading levels. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> How to help control the spread of flu by hand washing/cleansing and covering the mouth when coughing or sneezing. (See www.cdc.gov/flu/school/.) <input type="checkbox"/> How to recognize a person that may have the flu, and what to do if they think they have the flu. (See www.pandemicflu.gov.) <input type="checkbox"/> How to care for ill family members. (See www.hhs.gov/pandemicflu/plan/sup5.html#box4.) <input type="checkbox"/> How to develop a family plan for dealing with a flu pandemic. (See www.pandemicflu.gov/planguide/.)